



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited

18 November 2021

Original: English

Economic Commission for Africa
Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender
Fourth session

Online, 17-18 November 2021

Item 7 of the agenda*

Consideration and adoption of conclusions and recommendations of the fourth session

Draft recommendations

I. Reports to the Committee on Social Policy, Poverty and Gender – reporting and discussion

A. Subprogramme 9: Poverty, inequality and social policy

1. The Committee recommended that member States:
 - (a) Take advantage of technical assistance from ECA, which is readily available, by sending an official letter of request to the Executive Secretary;
 - (b) Collaborate with ECA in the dissemination and policy uptake of its knowledge products and tools.
2. The Committee recommended that ECA:
 - (a) Better clarify and share the means through which member States can seek technical support from ECA;
 - (b) Better convey the criteria under which member States are being selected to receive technical support;
 - (c) Track national programmes more consistently and use and disseminate good practices and examples to reduce the required resources and increase efficiency;
 - (d) Scale up its support to member States to tackle extreme poverty, which remains persistent despite decades of intervention;
 - (e) Scale up technical assistance to member States for the development of social policies and their implementation.

B. Subprogramme 6: Gender equality and women's empowerment

3. The Committee recommended that member States:
 - (a) Take full advantage of the technical support and advisory facilities offered by the Division;

* E/ECA/CSPPG/4/1.



(b) Use the findings from the research carried out on gender issues by the Division to inform their national programmes.

4. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Extend technical support and advisory services to countries that are not covered by current activities;

(b) Expand the implementation of the revised African Gender and Development Index beyond the two countries that have been included;

(c) Place more emphasis on sharing good practices in addressing gender inequalities for possible adoption and adaptation by member States;

(d) Support member States in the implementation and monitoring of the gender action plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

II. Parallel sessions

A. Parallel session 1 – Harnessing productive jobs: equipping women and girls with skills of tomorrow

5. The Committee recommended that member States and partners:

(a) Promote the collection of gender disaggregated data on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and digital technology usage to identify gender gaps for evidence-based policy action;

(b) Develop an educational strategy for STEM that promotes gender equality;

(c) Consider the usage of quotas and affirmative action in recruitment and hiring practices to enhance job prospects and opportunities for girls who study STEM;

(d) Encourage subsidies and grants, including the provision of bursaries, to reduce the financial barriers to STEM education and training;

(e) Tackle gender-biased language in the fields of STEM education, training, recruitment and career development through capacity-building programmes for targeted stakeholders, especially media and advertising entities;

(f) Promote the adoption of STEM education in schools at an early age, in national curricula and in extracurricular opportunities.

6. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Support member States through mentorship programmes for women and girls in STEM education and training, including through engagement with STEM-related organizations and institutions, learning visits and short-term work simulation and experience;

(b) Mobilize women leaders in STEM fields as mentors for girls that are still in school;

(c) Advocate and promote historical women pioneers in STEM fields as role models to motivate women and girls to pursue similar career choices;

(d) Consider the introduction of STEM-related awards for recognition of excellence and contributions to science;

(e) Support the development of policies and strategies to assist member States in promoting STEM education, training and job opportunities for women, focusing on digital literacy and technology usage;

(f) Promote the use of safe, responsible, high-quality and productive use of technology platforms among girls, emphasizing online learning opportunities;

(g) Advocate greater recognition of unpaid work and time poverty as barriers to women's empowerment and their productive use of time.

B. Parallel session 2 – promoting inclusive and resilient youth employment in Africa, now and beyond COVID-19

7. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Advocate a universal region-wide definition of young people;

(b) Develop knowledge products and policy tools to guide member States on how to effectively create decent jobs, while addressing rising aspirations and reducing inequality as young people transition to adulthood;

(c) Provide technical policy guidance on how to effectively support young people during their transitions into adulthood, including in coordination with several institutions: family, schools, businesses, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and communities;

(d) Provide technical support for the development of policies and tools that address both early training and community service as well as the transition from school to work.

C. Parallel session 3 – Inclusive and resilient growth in Africa: the role of spatial planning

8. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Strengthen linkages between urban and industrial policies and strategies to ensure that urbanization takes place alongside adequate productive job creation;

(b) Prioritize urbanization in national development plans also as a means of mobilizing actors and resources;

(c) Convey requests for technical assistance to ECA in the field of spatial planning and urbanization;

(d) Integrate spatial planning into economic planning for spatially sound investment decisions and dedicate appropriate financial and human resources for implementation;

(e) Strengthen the implementation of enforcement of urban legislation and building codes, given current inconsistencies;

(f) Promote local economic development in rural areas to provide opportunities and services in response to rural-urban migration;

(g) Ensure that spatial planning precedes economic and physical developments and investments to avoid unplanned sprawl and settlements.

9. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Tailor its technical support considering the specificities of regions and countries;

(b) Facilitate the sharing of experience on spatial and economic planning among member States;

(c) Communicate its work on urbanization to member States better and more systematically, given growing demand for support;

(d) Collaborate better with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to provide combined technical support on improved urban policies and strategies;

(e) Ensure that climate considerations are adequately reflected in technical assistance on urbanization.

III. Discussion on the theme of the fourth session “Building forward better towards an inclusive and resilient future in the context of COVID-19”

A. Presentation of the issues paper

10. The Committee recommended that member States build resilience by integrating into recovery plans gender issues, small and medium-sized enterprises, and assistance to vulnerable and poor households.

11. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Disseminate its technical report on risk and vulnerability and the corresponding index for member State engagement and uptake;

(b) Participate in country platforms and programmes on poverty to ensure improved buy-in and coherence of technical advice provided by ECA;

(c) Deliver consistent and sustained rather than ad hoc technical support to member States.

B. Breakout sessions:

Leveraging urbanization for inclusion and resilience

12. The Committee recommended that member States and partners:

(g) Align economic plans with financing and planning for sustainable urbanization;

(h) Better link urban and rural development and recognize the interdependence between the two.

13. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(h) Provide technical assistance to member States to put urbanization at the core of national development planning;

(i) Facilitate high-level political dialogues including various stakeholders at the national level to raise awareness of the importance of urbanization in overall growth and transformation for improved awareness among decision makers;

(j) Scale up the dissemination and sharing of its knowledge products and tools related to the importance of urbanization as a cross-cutting issue in national economic planning;

(k) Undertake multisectoral assessments of urbanization, focused not only on urban policies but also on national development planning and industrial policies;

(l) Identify and work with country-level focal points for urbanization in the relevant ministries in member States, ensuring coherence with partners and stakeholders;

(m) Facilitate learning processes and the sharing of experience among countries facing common challenges and regarding urbanization;

(n) Take into account the effects of climate change in African cities and the related policy implications.

Gender equality, women's empowerment and resilience

14. The Committee recommended that member States:

(a) Establish formal permanent support structures and investment plans to support women in the informal sector;

(b) Establish research structures, entities and bodies that provide scientific information on gender-related issues in order to support gender-transformative evidence-based policy interventions at the national level;

(c) Consider the promulgation and enforcement of legislation to protect victims of gender-based violence;

(d) Provide support for existing national and local structures working on gender-related challenges, especially those providing services for women;

(e) Promote field data collection, especially in collaboration with civil society organizations, in order to improve the availability of gender disaggregated data at the national level;

(f) Ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to national pandemic recovery plans and priorities;

(g) Establish national women's funds to encourage women's participation in decision-making, with a focus on mentoring programmes for young women in politics;

(i) Establish academies to strengthen young people's capacities to engage in politics, including academies that focus on other skills and career pathways, including arts, science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

(k) Promote the use of digital tools by women working in the informal sector to present and sell their products on online platforms and for their businesses and economic activities;

(l) Provide financial support to women affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through funds, cash transfers and other relevant social protection initiatives;

(m) Support women by leveraging clusters of value chains to enable wealth creation and therefore poverty eradication, through value addition and the sharing of good practices;

(n) Acknowledge and support the livelihoods of families, as women may be inadvertently affected by the pandemic through impacts faced by male family members who provide for the household;

(o) Promote positive masculinity and engage men and boys in national efforts to empower women and achieve gender equality.

15. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Compile and disseminate a list of good practices across Africa, in terms of support structures and legislation on gender-related issues;

(b) Support the dissemination of research and good practices on gender equality and women's empowerment through capacity development and technical assistance, as well as mainstreaming gender perspectives across different sectors that have the potential to advance women's economic empowerment;

(c) Develop a platform for women entrepreneurs to share information and good practices, complementing other efforts taking place across the region;

(d) Promote financial inclusion and digital literacy as a means of addressing women's empowerment.

Poverty, vulnerability and the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area

16. The Committee recommended that ECA:

(a) Continuously provide member States with technical support in designing policies and programmes to address poverty and minimize vulnerability to falling into poverty;

(b) Disseminate its reports earlier to enable member States to participate more effectively in and contribute to the discussions of the Committee.
